[*English*]

Legislation on Broadcasting

*189. SHRI UTTAMSINGH PAWAR:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has proposed 49% equity in the proposed Draft Broadcasting Bill;

(b) whether earlier there was 25% foreign equity limit;

(c) if so, the reasons for changing the equity from 25% to 49%;

(d) the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard;

(e) whether the Government have finalised the legislation on the said Broadcasting Bill;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the time by which it is likely to come into force?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) to (g) The issue of permitting foreign equity in broadcasting companies is secondary to the question of permitting private broadcasting from within the country. This and other related issues would be taken care of by the proposed broadcasting bill which is likely to be introduced during the current session of Parliament.

Landing at Calicut Airport

*190. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to take any steps to ensure safe landing of aircrafts at Calicut airport during Monsoons;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether work on the instrumental landing system/ night landing system at Calicut Airport has been completed; and

(d) if so, when it is likely to be commissioned?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) to (d) Instrument Landing System is already in operation at Calicut airport since June, 1996, which facilitates safe landing of aircraft during fog/rain. Extension of runway from the existing 6,000 ft. length to 9,000 ft. length has also been taken up to enable safe landing of bigger aircraft of Airbus 300 type. This work is likely to be completed by January, 2000 and night landing facility would also become operational by that time.

[*Translation*]

Austerity Drive in SAIL

*191. SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "SAIL Chief Hints at Austerity Drive", appearing in the 'Financial Express' dated January 15, 1997;

(b) if so, whether a decision has been taken to launch a drive for checking extravagance and to enforce austerity in the Steel Authority of India Limited;

(c) if so, the details of the scheme formulated in this regard;

(d) the extent of financial loss likely to be checked as a result of the implementation of the said scheme;

(e) whether any survey has been conducted before taking decision regarding implementation of the said scheme; and

(f) if so, the details of the survey report?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (f) SAIL is taking steps on a continuous basis for enforcing austerity and reducing cost of production which include modernisation and technological upgradation of its plants; improved quality product-mix and production in line with market requirement, improving techno-economic factors i.e reduction in coke rate, energy consumption, metallic input, improvement in yield; improving availability of equipment through effective maintenance; strict control on administrative expenses etc.

These measures are likely to result in substantial savings during 1996-97. Austerity measures and measures for reduction in cost of production being continuous efforts, do not require any separate survey. Austerity measures have been re-emphasised for identification of more areas of expenditure control.

Irregularities Committed in Awarding Contract of Gauge Conversion

*192. PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether numerous irregularities have been committed in Railways in awarding the contracts for gauge conversion;

(b) if so, whether the investigation of the said cases has been entrusted to CBI;

(c) if so, the total number of cases handed over to CBI for investigation so far and the time by which the investigation of these cases is likely to be completed;

(d) whether CBI has sought necessary permission for filing the chargesheets against some officials; and

(e) If so, the details of such cases?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (c) A few cases of irregularity have come to the notice in the award of various contracts for gauge conversion works on different Railways, which are being/ have been investigated by the Railway Vigilance and the CBI.

CBI have taken up 6 cases for investigation where prima-facie irregularities in award of the contracts have been detected. The matter is being pursued with the CBI for early completion of the investigation.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

[*English*]

Borrowing of Funds

*193. SHRI I.D. SWAMI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Railway Board has borrowed crores of rupees from the public through the Indian Railway Finance Corporation Ltd.;

(b) if so, the amount borrowed, the year of borrowing, date of maturity with interest and purpose for which it was borrowed; and

(c) the manner in which the Railway propose to finance the huge amount?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The desired information is as under:

Amount borrowed (Rs./Crs)	Year of borrowing	Date of Maturity	Purpose
959.40	1987-88	April 97 & Feb. 98	These funds are
600.00	1988-89	Feb-March,1999	used for
1000.00	1989-90	Dec. 1999 & Jan. 2000	procurement of
1170.00	1990-91	Aug. 2000 & Mar. 2001	Railway Rolling
1500.00	1991-92	July & Nov.2001	Stock assets.
Nil	1992-93		
740.71	1993-94	March 1999 & March, 2001	
206.50	1994-95	Oct. 2001 & January, 2002	
259.32	1995-96	Sept. 2002 to March, 2003	
6435.93			

Note: (1) In addition to the above, Indian Railway Finance Corporation raised USD 70 million through External Commercial Borrowing during 1995-96 and 1996-97 for import of capital goods by Indian Railways. These will become due for repayment in March, 2003.

(2) The interest payable to the Bond-holders, possessing non-cumulative Bonds, is paid half-yearly. Those who hold cumulative Bonds will be paid interest along with the value of their Bonds on maturity as per the scheme.

(c) The funds are invested in the rolling stock which is given on lease to the railways. The Lease Rentals paid by the Railways to the Indian Railway Finance Corporation include interest and principal recovery enabling the Corporation to service the lenders as well as redeem the bonds on maturity.

[*Translation*]

Hike in the Fares of AI and IA

*194. DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to increase the fares of Indian Airlines and Air India;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time by which the increased fares are proposed to be made effective; and

(c) the difference between the fares of the Indian Airlines and that of private airlines?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) and (b) So far as Indian Airlines is